DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 353 337 TM 019 403

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TITLE An Issues-Based Research Project: National Goals on Trial.
PUB DATE Nov 92
NOTE 48p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Mid-South Educational Research Association (Knoxville, TN, November 11-13, 1992).
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Dissent; Doctoral Programs; *Educational Objectives; Elementary Secondary Education; Graduate Students; Higher Education; *National Programs; *Persuasive Discourse; *Public Education; *Research Papers (Students); Student Attitudes
IDENTIFIERS America 2000; National Education Goals 1990; Trials

ABSTRACT

This paper summarizes the results of a research project completed by three doctoral students enrolled in an advanced curriculum development course at the University of Southern Mississippi (Hattiesburg). The students used a mock trial format to consider reasons to support establishment of a national curriculum (concerning the American public's negative attitude toward the current quality of public education, the promotion of healthy economics, the development of national cohesion, and improved academic achievement) and reasons to oppose establishment of a national curriculum (concerning local control and empowerment, cultural diversity, economics, standardized tests, and potential obstacles). The instructional strategy used in the students' graduate class to effectively deal with issue-based topics in curriculum development is described. The instructor and students present their individual perspectives. The results suggest that until there is a general consensus about the purpose of schools and until this purpose is articulated in a way that is consistent with the conditions of an emerging information-based post-industrial society, substantial improvement in schools' performance is unlikely. Educational leaders must think of themselves as leading and working in knowledge-work organizations. Included are 36 references. Appendices provide a sample evaluation form used to rate class presentations and the research project agenda. (RLC)

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AN ISSUES-BASED RESEARCH PROJECT:

NATIONAL GOALS ON TRIAL

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Paper accompanying display session at Mid-South

Educational Research Association Meeting

Knoxville, Tennessee

November, 1992

NATIONAL GOALS ON TRIAL

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Abstract

One of the many current issues related to education concerns the development of a national curriculum. President Bush's and the governors' National Goals unveiled in January of 1990 have led to increasing attention to a national curriculum. The movements toward global education, more accountability and educational equity for all students have added to the fuel for a common, national curriculum for all students. On the other hand, there is widespread movement toward decentralization of school systems to create more local, site-based autonomy in all phases of school operation, including curriculum decisions.

The focus of this paper is a summary of the findings that resulted from a research project completed by three doctoral student enrolled in an advanced curriculum development course. The pro's and con's of developing a national curriculum are explored.

A second purpose of the paper is to explain the instructional strategy used in a graduate class to deal effectively with issue-based topics in curriculum development. The instructor and students respond to the experience by describing their individual perspectives.

An Issues-Based Research Project: National Goals on Trial

The Instructional Perspective

At all levels of education, there is a need for more reflective teaching and learning practices. Reform movements are doomed to fail if this key element is not addressed. Higher education classrooms are certainly no exception and may well be the cornerstone of true educational reform in this nation. If programs preparing future teachers and administrators do not embrace reflective, strategic practices, the likelihood that such changes will occur more widespread at lower levels seems remote.

In a review of educational reform movements, Rick Breault (1991) concludes that programs of teacher education need to be revamped and designed to nurture adaptability, reflection, and professionalism. Among Breault's many suggestions for improving higher education courses are the following:

1. Providing more/extended periods of action and reflection;
2. Helping students identify sources of uncertainty and see a greater range of uncertainties;
3. Giving special attention to the challenge of professional decision-making under "real world" conditions of multiple and competing demands and expectations;
4. Emphasizing the importance of adaptabililty and spontaneity

5. Conducting research in problem-solving sessions with peers and in group projects.

Teacher as facilitator and resource-agent of a class in which students are involved more in small, cooperative group work is a model of teaching and learning applicable to higher education classrooms as well as in the K-12 context where this movement has typically focused (Slavin, 1989). In their work with improving the preparation of educational administrators, Bridges and Hollinger (1991) offer problem-based curricula as a promising approach that is designed to foster more independence and initiative among students who pursue problem-solving within the context of small group work rather than sit passively attending lectures. The group work allows for what these researchers call more "elaboration" of information through interaction with other students and exchanging of ideas and view points. This elaboration is similar to what Breault calls "extended periods of action and reflecting" wherein students have time, space, and circumstances to inquire, think, and talk, about topics among each other. Whatever it is called - elaboration, cooperative learning or action and reflection - an important common aim of this type of class/activity is to provide for redundant use of information which leads to better understanding, quicker recall, and less forgetting (Bridges, Hollinger, 1991).

Higher education faculty are notoriously reliant on lectures and instructor-led discussions as their primary approaches to instruction. While higher education students are no doubt more capable of learning in this context than the general population of K-12 classrooms, they too could benefit from improved instruction. More importantly they would more likely practice as they have been taught, not merely told.

Teaching Strategy

With these concerns in mind and a commitment to practice what I preached, I set out to design a course in advanced curriculum development that would model good, research-based practices for reflective classroom instruction and learning. In this three-hour, weekly class were eleven graduate students who were primarily veteran, employed educators working on advanced degrees in educational administration. These students were our today's and tomorrow's leaders and were, or soon would be, at the helm of educational reform. I wanted to broaden the knowledge bases and perspectives of students while capitalizing on their rich and varied expertise and backgrounds.

In this context, the idea for using group-based assignments to research critical issues in curriculum development emerged. Today's assortment of critical issues in the curriculum field is broad and ripe for debate. The first task was to narrow the

field, to determine more specifically the content goals with students participating in the process. To accomplish this, the class participated in a brainstorming session in which I broadly assessed students' prior knowledge and elicited their particular interests in the field.

The next task was to design an assignment suited to the objectives of exploring an issues-based topic in curriculum for advanced students. Students were asked to select the priority topics from those suggested in the brainstorming session which groups of 3 or 4 students would then research as a cooperative team effort. The assignment was explained as follows.

1. Students would be grouped into teams according to interest (3-5 members per group)

2. The group's topic must be researched from all perspectives with all sides of the issue dealt with equitably.

3. Each group was to present on a scheduled date in $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 hours the results of their research to other class members.

4. Each group was to develop its own presentation format using whatever instructional strategies they deemed most appropriate. The involvement of the class in the presentation topic was a primary goal.

5. The entire class would participate in evaluating each presentation. All members of a group would receive same grade. (see Appendix #1)

6. A summary of research findings and bibliography of references was to be distributed to all class members on the night of presentation.

Emphases on examining issues from all sides and involving class members were key elements in the assignment. Most of the critical issues had a range of possible positions from a far-right (pro) to a far-left (con) perspective. Students were instructed to explore all sides of the issue despite their own proclivities at that point in an objective, research-based manner and ultimately to derive a group position, the rationale behind it, and its implications on the future of education.

Topics the class chose included (1) multiculturalism in the curriculum, (2) grouping for instruction, and (3) a national curriculum. The group that chose the national curriculum were particularly successful in accomplishing the goals of the assignment. They felt so positive about the results that they wanted to share their experience with others. Their initiative resulted in this paper and the display session at the 1992 annual MSERA conference.

Not all groups are as successful as this particular group, but most find this issues-based, team approach an effective way to pursue the complex topics related to curriculum. The primary objective (for students to broaden their perspectives and intellectual grasps of educational issues) seems well-matched to the approach (group-based research projects) and has yielded several outstanding, well-developed group projects since this

group made its debut last spring. Directing students to approach the issue from all sides, including the most polaric, forces them to consider equitably all perspectives. Working together as a team to organize and present their findings to classmates increases their interaction and levels of dialogue regarding the issue. This "elaboration" on the information encourages the redundancy which Bridges and Hollinger espouse for increased understanding and recall. The approach accommodates many of the recommendations made by Breault as well: providing for extended periods of action and reflection; helping students identify areas of uncertainty and broaden their perspectives; and conducting research in problem-solving sessions with peers and in group projects.

The instuctor also benefits from this process. As the instructor facilitates the group work and observes the presentation, she has increased opportunity to broaden her own perspectives, hone her interaction skills, and keep abreast of the latest research and information on related topics that are "hot" and are ever changing dimensions. Indeed, growth potential for the whole class, students and instructor, is enhanced when the "straight jacket" effect of instructor as lecturer and sole disseminator of knowledge is replaced by whole class involvement

in shared learning and teaching.

Students' Perspective: Response to Assignment

After selecting national curriculum as a topic, our three-member group determined that a mock trial format would best satisfy the objectives of the assignment which would include the following:

1. This format would require us to research all sides of the issue, regardless of personal views held by individual group members;
2. This format would provide a stimulating, participatory approach that would keep class members engaged throughout the two-hour presentation (See Appendix #2); and
3. The chosen format would provide well-established roles for members to assume and would ensure individual group member participation consisting of defender of the pros, defender of the cons, and the moderator whose primary responsibility would be to explain the presentation format as well as expectations of class members. In addition, the moderator would introduce the critical nature of the topic and its merit as a national concern.

A summary of this project follows.

Summary of Research Project's Findings

Introduction

National curriculum may be defined as a national plan or system for selecting content and organizing learning for the purpose of (1) improving teaching and learning; and (2) assessing school programs, teacher training, and policies that affect learning; and coordinating systematic coherence and local flexibility. This paper will attempt to present two polarities: reasons to support and reasons to oppose a national curriculum.

In order to discuss the subject of a national curriculum, one must first put it into perspective with what is occurring nationally in education, as well as in society. One aspect of a national curriculum to consider is its relationship to America 2000, President Bush's strategy for achieving six national goals. Approximately two years ago the nation's governors convened at the University of Virginia and adopted the following six National Goals for Education to be achieved by the year 2000:

(1) Every child will come to school ready to learn;

(2) The high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90%

(3) American students will demonstrate competency in challenging subject matter, and every school will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well;

(4) U.S. students will be first in the world in science and math achievement;

(5) Every adult will be a literate, skilled, responsible citizen, and

(6) Every school in America will be free of drugs and violence.

Indeed, these national goals have presented a formidable challenge, considering the absence of financial support coupled with the promises of politicians and complaints of the business and industry world. As the president was being cited at the summit for his commitment to education, business people were suggesting that poorly trained youths were the reason American business was having trouble competing. Workforce 2000, a study done over five years ago for the U.S. Department of Labor, describes the manufacturing labor force shrinking. It also reports that at the turn of the century, only 13% of the population will be young (20-29 years of age); that there will be more women workers; that minorities will make up a larger portion of workers than in the past; and that more new workers will be immigrants than at any time since World War I.

Another factor of a national curriculum to consider is its role and relationship to societal forces. Facts such as those presented in Workforce 2000 ultimately lead to a skills gap in

society. The private sector's training efforts, which now affect one of every 10 workers, would have to reach three of every 10 with the cost being 88 billion dollars. Why is the bill so high? The Bureau of Census tells us that one out of every four births in the United States in 1990 was illegitimate; that over two-thirds of births to teenage mothers were illegitimate; that 90% of births to black teenagers were illegitimate; and that babies born out of wedlock are likely to be poor and disadvantaged, but babies born to teenagers are at greatest risk.

Today one in eight employees reads at no better than fourth grade level, and one in five reads at eighth grade level. The National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) expects that U.S. employers will be soon hiring a million workers who cannot read, write or count adequately; and those already at work, about 30 million of them, will have to be trained. As jobs grow more demanding, education and training deficiencies will continue to cause a fundamental mismatch between jobs and workers that will necessitate a substantial expansion in corporate training.

In June 1991 the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) of the U.S. Department of Labor produced What Work Requires of Schools, a document defining the workplace competencies and foundation skills required for effective job

performance. In addition, the President announced Job Training 2000, a new effort to improve the job training system; the New American Schools Development Corporation (NASDC) presented its Council on Education Standards and Testing endorsed the workplace competencies defined by SCANS, with the suggestion that they be integrated into national standards and assessments of core academic subjects.

In April 1992, the SCANS final report Learning A Living: A Blueprint For High Performance moved beyond the previous description of what must be done to build high-performance workplaces and schools to a description of how young people, as well as those workers already on the job, can be prepared for productive work in the 21st century. Efforts to link education to the real world are presently emerging across the United States through America 2000 satellite town meetings, which address the nation's six education goals. As a result, the national debate about education and training, their purposes and their progress continue to challenge the business and education arenas to combine their efforts in producing a nation of learners.

Taking into account the aforementioned ideas presented, what are the advantages of having a national curriculum? What are the disadvantages of having a national curriculum. Is a national

curriculum necessary if the education goals of America 2000 are to be accomplished? If so, how can it address the plethora of societal problems which exist?

ARGUMENTS FOR THE DEFENSE

The idea of a national curriculum is one of the most powerful and provocative to emerge from the nearly 10-year-old school-reform movement. Pushed by President Bush and the National Governor's Association, and endorsed by widely respected educational, business, and political leaders, it has moved to the top of the reform agenda with astonishing speed (Wolk, 1992). According to Wolk, the New Standards Project--a coalition of 17 states which has nearly half the public school students in the United States--is hard at work developing content standards, and began field testing assessment tasks in May, 1992. Gregory Arnig (1992), president of the Educational Testing Service, states, "This is a very dynamic, healthy, and promising period in education reform."

Attitude of the American Public

The prevailing attitude of the American public toward public education is that the schools are "in a big mess" (Eisner, 1991). Why is this attitude negative? Many believe that it started with the publication of, A Nation at

Risk. This document was written in 1983 by then Education Secretary William Bennett where he drew a dismal picture of the American public school. Others believe that this negative attitude started in the 1970's, when parents began to feel their kids were not learning well enough for the world that awaited them. During the 70's many schools were in turmoil due to desegregation and the public wanted more accountability for the product being turned out.

Consequently, in a recent poll 69% of the public are in favor of a national curriculum (Smith, O"Day, & Cohen, 1991). In August, 1991 the nation's average SAT score was 422--lowests ever (Urbanski, 1991). In the same article Urbanski wrote that only 30% of 17 year old students can write an adequate paragraph, only 2.6% can write a persuasive letter, and only 5% are ready for college algebra. In 1988 the National Asssessment of Educational Progress published a report, "The Nation's Report Card", showing the percentage of students at or above grade level in school subjects. One alarming statistic was that only 4.6% of 12th grade students can interpret historical information and ideas. For example, only 4.6% of the students could explain why settlers came to America?

We must start the process of reform, not repairing the same old system. Today's schools are the same as they were in 1920. America's teachers are doing the best possible job in an obsolete system. The world has changed, students have changed, and parents have changed, but the structure of the school has not.

The national curriculum will create the impetus to really reform the system and consequently mobilize public opinion toward a higher confidence level. The national curriculum would, in fact, give the public confidence that students are learning what they need for today's world when education is held to some mutually agreed upon uniform standards.

Promote Healthy Economics

If we believe that adequate competitiveness with the rest of the world is dependent on how well our people are educated, then we cannot be slack any longer. Technical expertise is necessary, but a broad based education is more essential to understand appropriateness. Workers must be able to see the whole picture and ask himself/herself, "Why does my job exist"? Workers must be aware that they are not working to just bring home a paycheck, but they are a part of a world economic system. This system depends

on how efficient individuals are. We must produce workers who think and not just perform tasks. We must produce workers who are geared toward recognition of how to improve a product or procedure not just perform it. They must be able to analyze and draw conclusions. Today, one of eight employees reads at not better than fourth grade level. One in five reads at eighth grade level (Society of Manufacturing Engineers, 1992). Therefore, a specified curriculum of substance, not just name will give the United States a competeitive edge in the world market.

Build National Cohesion

The national curriculum will serve as a cultural cement in our society, because of the commonality of the curriculum. Students across the nation will learn the essentials for being successful. According to the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (1991), America's students need competency in resource allocation (time, money, materials, etc.), interpersonal skills, acquiring and processing information, understanding social and technological systems, and technology.

Developing educational equity is an overriding concern in developing a national system of standards and assessments

for two reasons. The first is moral. In a nation whose laws and values center on the individual, all children deserve an opportunity to make something good and valuable of their lives. Education is this opportunity and national standards reflect our belief that "all children can learn" (Romer, 1992).

Furthermore, diversity taken to a fault is dangerous. Groups who have little in common become strange to one another. Strangeness breeds suspicion which leads to hostility which may lead to violence. Teach America's great works of prose and poetry beginning in the early grades. According to Ravich ad Finn (1987), such writings help us to understand how cultures came to be. This will lead to a better understanding of all groups, cultures, and races.

Improved Academic Achievement

An improvement in academic achievement is what prompted President Bush, Secretary Alexander, and the governors to endorse the concept of a national curriculuIm. A congressionally appointed committee has recently approved the idea of a national curriculum and the American Achievement Test. Schools will be focused on what should be taught. The American Achievement Test to be developed will

give direction for academic improvement. A recent poll indicates that 77% of the public supports a national achievement test. It is likely that when teachers know what is to be tested, academic achievement will improve.

The following educational groups support the concept of a national curriculum:

1. American Federation of Teachers,
2. The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics,
3. The Mathematics and Science Educational Board,
4. The American Association of Advanced Science,
5. And the National Academy of Sciences.

The National Curriculuim and Local Control

Many erroneously believe that a national curriculum will lead to loss of local control in education. This is simply not true. First, the national curriculum as advocated by President Bush and the governors is a voluntary program. Each state and subsequently each system will be asked to join the effort and align themselves with the standards and assessments agreed upon.

Secondly, it is actually a grassroots movement to involve the local school and community to improve schools. The SCANS report advocates having town meetings to get the public involved in standards and assessment. Also, the federal government is

providing some leadership and ideas, but very little money. Without federal dollars there will be little federal control.

Thirdly, widespread teacher involvement is being seen in addressing new standards. Teachers are being taught how to teach the new standards proposed by the national Council of Teachers of Mathematics. More than 35 states are involved in training teachers to teach to this set of standards (Mills 1992). The state universities in the state of Louisiana through the LaSIP project is helping to train middle school and high school teachers in teaching athe NCTM standards using "hi-tech" and "hand-on" methods.

Conclusion of Defense

In order for America to produce "world class students" America's students must be taught "world class standards" in "world class schools". It is evident just by looking at recent standardized tests scores that many of our students are not world class. What then is the answer? Putting aside the belief that the family has deteriorated and that is why our schools are failing, we must change the way we look at educating our young. A system of national standards is not the entire solution but it is a move in the right direction. In the opinion of many educational, political and business leaders, a national

curriculum could be the catalyst to promote the kind of school reform that America's schools need.

ARGUMENTS FOR THE PROSECUTION

In 1990, President Bush and the National Governors' Association developed six national education goals for the year 2000. While not specifically mentioning curriculum, the goals will ultimately affect the areas of curriculum content, form and decision making. The obvious impact on curriculum cannot be disputed. What can and will continue to be disputed for a long time is the exact nature of a curriculum that provides for the achievement of "excellence." Educational, social, political, religious, and business leaders and groups all vie to establish their own particular definition of the "perfect" curriculum.

Local Control and Empowerment

The national response to America 2000: An Education Strategy (1991) seems to be the current guiding force for most curricular decisions. Unfortunately, it just seems to add difficulty to an already difficult procedure. The move to federal control in curricular issues would not serve the democratic ideals of our nation and violate the long tradition of local control in American education (Kellaghan, & Madaus, 1991). As citizens of the U.S. we believe that only a democracy can improve society, and as such the

will of the governed should prevail. When individuals lose the right to plan and control their own work, they lose the very skills they worked so hard to attain. In particular, teachers lose the ability to set curricular goals, design lessons and develop instructional strategies based on the needs of their students. A standardized curriculum based on tested competencies and dependent on predesigned commercial materals serves to drain the creativity and initiative of local education efforts (Apple, 1983).

Consequently, the implementation of a national curriculum would violate the findings of the enormous body of research on effective schools, restructuring, and site-bases management (Conley & Bacharach, 1990). Most of these findings point again and again to participatory decision making as a key variable in developing motivation and commitment among staff members. Glickman (1990, p. 69) states that when educators are given the responsibility to make decisions they will "work harder and smarter on behalf of their students and their parents." Further, Glickman (1990, p. 72) asserts that when empowerment succeeds, each local school establishes programs that are "unique to its own staff, students, and history."

The curriculum of the future must insure that all individuals affected be given a voice in the decision-making process.

Teacher, parents, concerned citizens, business and industry, students and other interest groups must be involved to promote trust, cooperation and support. There must be a concerted effort to present curricular proposals and programs to the community and seriously respond to criticisms.

Cultural Diversity

Oliva (1988) suggests that the national curriculum movement could seriously impede the need to balance functional literacy while preserving a curriculum that permits personal growth and development, acceptance of individual differences, and it promotes a cultural literacy not to be found in the typical core curriculum.

A national curriculum would fail to promote the inclusion of "real" histories, cultures, and contributions of ethnic minorities and women. "Students should have thorough exposure to the core of basic skills, but they should also have a curriculum which is relevant to their social environment ...and which recognizes cultural diversity as a resource, not a deficit, in learning" (Bastian et al., 1985, p. 47). The curriculum would also fail to eliminate sexist and racist stereotypes and advance the needs of all people through content. Students could never attain a socially relevant curriculum that recognized cultural diversity as

a resource rather than a deficit in learning. Cultural imperialism and elitism could result.

Economics

The changing nature of society, technology, and the impact of reductions in federal spending for education ultimately affect the quality of schooling. The financial impact on local or state education budgets will be determined to the extent they must assume responsibility for the quality and variety of curriculum materials, evaluation and assessment tools, the supply and quality of teachers and their preparation, instructional materials and other resources. The dismal financial condition of most school districts due to a weakened economy has already led to the elimination or reduction of budgets and programs. Imposing a national curriculum without equitable disbursement of federal funds will overwhelm the public school system.

Standardized Tests

A national curriculum would naturally result in some form of national tests. Delegates to the 1992 NEA Representative Assembly voted to oppose standardized testing that is mandated by a state or a national authority and used to compare one school district to another. They argued that tests should be used to improve teaching and learning (Needhan, 1992). To describe students in

numbers alone neglects the deeper mission of schooling: the cultivation of intellect, the growth and stimulation of curiosity and imagination, and the identification of unique human potentialities.

Potential Obstacles

Various authors (Kaplan, 1991; Kellaghan & Madaus, 1991) argue that a national curriculum will have the following effects: (1) local control and interest will decrease, (2) it would promote elitism and imperialism, (3) it would promote a common culture when individual cultures should be preserved, (4) it would produce a "big brother" syndrome, (5) teaching for critical literacy would be difficult, (6) curriculum decision-making would result in a diminished professional role for local educators, (7) the intrinsic effects of schooling may become devalued, (8) standardized examinations narrow the curriculum, and (9) lower-order skills would tend to be emphasized.

In the final analysis, a stagnant and unyielding national curriculum cannot and will not work. Curricula should always be subject to democratic deliberation in order to determine goals, direction, content and method of evaluation.

IMPLICATIONS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

When one considers the reasons to support and to oppose the establishment of a national curriculum, one must also examine them in the context of the purpose of schools. Until there is a general consensus regarding the purpose of schools and until this purpose is articulated in a way that is consistent with the conditions of an emerging information-based, post-industrial society, substantial improvement in the performance of schools is probably unlikely. For schools to become the kinds of organizations that they need to become, it is necessary for educational leaders to think of themselves as leading and working in knowledge-work organizations. They must think of themselves as leading organizations whose primary purpose is to invent knowledge work for students so they will learn what they need to know to function in a knowledge-work world and an information-based society. In addition, as America's business leaders are coming to understand, traditional ways of doing business will not suffice in a society that is increasingly dependent on the application of knowledge and information as the primary means of raising productivity and improving the quality of life. In order for leaders to become more effective, they must realize that "if you do

what you've always done, you get what you've always got" (Schlechty, 1991).

Final Comments: Students' Individual Reactions to the Assignment and Group Work

Priscilla

When initially assigned the task of forming groups to research and make presentations on critical issues, I issued a silent moan. Group work, Bah! Critical issues, Humbug! Little did I realize this would become one of my most rewarding educational experiences. The assignment format was a refreshing change from the traditional lecture or instructor directed format. It actually required students to conduct extensive research, carefully analyze current critical issues, and develop a presentation format that provided comprehensive coverage of the topic in a manner designed to minimize yawns. Of course, I had the good fortune to be in a group with two exceptional, self-motivated students. We worked hard but, wonder of wonders, we had fun! I wish this format could be used more often in education courses. It forces one to examine critical issues on a global rather than local or personal level.

Ann

Throughout the entire process of this assignment, the

instructor's primary function was that of a facilitator. Initially, current issues in education were brainstormed with all class members in order to provoke ideas for presentation topics. Students were allowed to form their own groups, choose their own topic, and plan their method for presentation. Even though the instructor, for the most part, used an indirect approach to guide students through the assignment, she also set parameters to which groups were to adhere. For example, each group was required to submit a one-page proposal of the topic to be discussed. This exercise forced groups to review current issues, agree to and begin researching one topic, and make decisions as to methods of presentation. This plan of action utilized much consensus and collaboration among my group members. Once our proposal was approved by the instructor, my group was free to conduct further research and share information with each other. In addition, this freedom allowed my group to be more creative in presenting our topic in mock trial format. Prior to the first presentation, the instructor once again checked the pulse of each group to assure that progress was being accomplished. She was also available for individual conferences. During my group's presentation, all class members and the instructor became active participants, which in turn served as a support base for members of my group. The

dynamics of this active participation lent itself to increased enthusiasm of class members for the issue being examined. Once the process was complete, I realized that the three-member group and the mock trial format for presenting our issue were two ingredients that assured equal contributions from members of my group.

Charles

My initial reaction to the assignment was that this can be a worth while learning experience if all members of the group are willing to work and each do their part. As it turned out the group was very compatible and the project went smoothly. I felt that each member of the group was more than willing to do their fair share.

The assignment was a tremendous learning experience from three perspectives: (a) the topic had to be researched, (b) creativity was necessary, and (c) presentation skills in role playing were exercised.

Each member of the group reviewed current literature related to the topic to determine the pros and cons of the issue. The articles that were found were shared with each member of the group. We wanted each member to have the same information to prepare his/her part of the presentation. The cooperative learning

research process was very time effective for the group.

As the group began working it was obvious that we were going to create or prepare a presentation that was somewhat original. In other words, there was no model to follow. We decided to demonstrate a courtroom scenario to present the pros and cons of the topic. Even though it was a courtroom scenario it was not exactly congruent to courtroom proceedings. For example, the moderator was not the judge but served as a facilitator would in a debate or panel discussion. Also, since our group had only three members we had to be creative in the roles that each played--sometimes playing two roles. The person representing the defense served as the expert witness as well as his own attorney and likewise the person representing the prosecution served as the expert witness and the attorney for that side.

The presentation skills needed were more than just giving information and opinions. Each side tried to persuade the class (the jury) that they had the best case, therefore, justification with a lot of enthusiasm was planned for. We felt that in order to make the presentation as authentic as possible each member had to stay in character from beginning to end. In addition the view of the character did not necessarily reflect the view of the person playing the character. This was a very enjoyable part of

the assignment.

The overall experience of this assignment was very positive both from the standpoint of learning about the topic as well as presenting the topic to the class. I would highly recommend it for other issues related topics.

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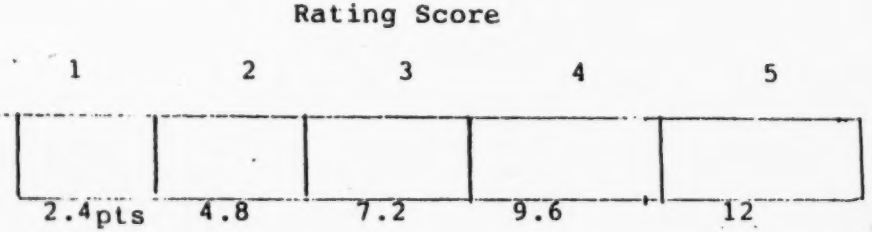
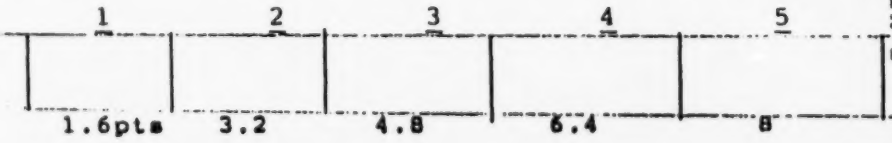
Evaluation Form
Presentation

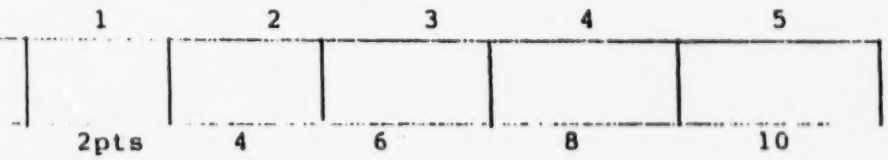
Presenters' Names: _____ Date: _____

Topic _____ Evaluator's Name _____

Rating Scale:
1 - Not satisfactory
2 - Weak
3 - Acceptable
4 - Above average
5 - Outstanding







(28) pts. Overall Rating

SAMPLE EVALUATION
FORM USED BY CLASS TO RATE
GROUP PRESENTATIONS
Appendix 1

National Goals on Trial

Appendix # 2
AGENDA: THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM
GROUP'S HANDOUT FOR PRESENTATION

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Definition of National Curriculum

For the purpose of this presentation a national curriculum will be defined as a national plan or a system for selecting content and organizing learning for the purpose of:

1. Improving teaching and learning;
2. Assessing school programs, teacher training, and policies that affect learning, and coordinating systematic coherence and local flexibility.

B. Objectives

1. To present and discuss reasons in <u>support</u> of a national curriculum
2. To present and discuss reasons in <u>opposition</u> of a national curriculum

C. <u>Teletalk: America 2000</u> (Videotape)

D. Activity #1 (Handout)

1. Meet as <u>one</u> group (entire class) and select a member who will serve as the foreman of the jury;
2. Separate into two groups (as assigned on handout) and work on Activity #1
3. Report

E. Future View: Will the Workforce Work?

[BREAK AND REFRESHMENTS]

II. NATIONAL CURRICULUM ON TRIAL

A. Introductions

1. "For": Charles Scriber
2. "Against": Priscilla DeVille
3. Moderator: Ann Georgian
4. Judge: Dr. Gupton
5. Jury: Class Members

B. Rules/Understandings
1. Views expressed--not necessarily the personal views of the presenters;
2. Presenters--to stay in role the entire time;

3. Two types of questions--asked of each presenter
   (a) First group of questions--to allow each presenter to support his/her argument; begin with proponent of national curriculum
   (b) Second group of questions--to serve as cross examination questions (such as those that would come from a prosecuting attorney)
4. Moderator--to act as timekeeper
5. Jury--expected to listen and take notes on handout provided
6. Jury Foreman--may ask one(1) question of each stance if jury does not feel the issues were not covered adequately

III. ACTIVITY #2: DELIBERATION OF JURY (Handout)

IV. VERDICT SUPPORTED BY REASONS

A. Report by jury foreman
B. No discussion allowed

V. WRAP-UP

A. Concluding Remarks: Review of Specific Objectives
B. A Different Strategy: How About National Goals for Business People and Politicians?
C. Evaluation

NATIONAL AND STATE EDUCATION GOALS

PRESIDENT BUSH'S EDUCATION PLAN "AMERICA 2000" IS INTERESTING BECAUSE HE PROMISES A LOT:

* ALL CHILDREN WILL START SCHOOL READY TO LEARN;
* THE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE WILL INCREASE TO AT LEAST 90 PERCENT;
* STUDENTS WILL DEMONSTRATE COMPETENCY IN CHALLENGING SUBJECTS AND WILL BE PREPARED FOR RESPONSIBLE CITIZENSHIP, FURTHER LEARNING, AND PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYMENT;
* STUDENTS WILL BE FIRST IN THE WORLD IN SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS ACHIEVEMENT;
* EVERY ADULT WILL BE LITERATE AND POSSESS COMPETITIVE SKILLS IN A GLOBAL ECONOMY;
* EVERY SCHOOL WILL BE FREE OF DRUGS AND VIOLENCE AND WILL OFFER A DISCIPLINED ENVIRONMENT CONDUCIVE TO LEARNING.

BUSH HAS ALSO PROPOSED A NATIONAL TEST.

FORDICE THEN PROPOSED "MISSISSIPPI 2000" WHICH PROMISES:

* SCHOOLS OF CHOICE;
* TYING TEACHER RAISES AND PROMOTION TO CLASSROOM PERFORMANCE;
* REQUIRING SCHOOLS TO PUBLISH ANNUAL "REPORT CARDS" WITH INFORMATION ON TEST SCORES AND DROPOUT RATES;
* REDUCING ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS IN DISTRICTS. (FORDICE SAID ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL THAT DISTRICTS SPEND AS MUCH AS 40% ON ADMINISTRATION. THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION COMPUTES THAT OF THE $3,188 AVERAGE EXPENDITURE PER STUDENT, $923 (29%) WAS SPENT FOR COUNSELLING, ADMINISTRATION, AND TRANSPORTATION.)

Activity #1: National Curriculum

INTRODUCTION:

For the purpose of this presentation a national curriculum will be defined as a national plan or a system for selecting content and organizing learning for the purposes of: (a) improving teaching and learning; and (b) assessing school programs, teacher training, and policies that affect learning, and coordinating systematic coherence and local flexibility.

GROUP 1: Evelyn, Gwen, Charles Lee, Dr. Gupton

Discuss the impact that implementing a national curriculum would have on students and parents.

List five(5) advantages and five(5) disadvantages of a national curriculum with regard to students and parents.

Advantages:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Disadvantages:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

(OVER FOR GROUP 2 ACTIVITY)

WORKFORCE 2000: FIVE DEMOGRAPHIC FACTS

THE SHRINKING POOL

1. By 2000, the population will probably be only 15% greater than in 1985.
2. The U.S. Bureau of Statistics estimates 7%-18% growth (based on the return of large families, lower death rates through advances in cancer and AIDS treatment, and many immigrants).

MORE OLDER WORKERS

1. As the population (and workforce) average age rises, the pool of young workers shrinks.
2. In 1986-2000, 38% more people will be in age group 35-47.

   67% more will be in age group 48-53.
3. At the turn of the century, only 13% of the population will be young (20-29 years of age).

MORE WOMEN

There will be more women workers, though the rate at which they join the workforce will taper off.

MORE MINORITIES

Minorities will make up a larger proportion of workers than in the past.

MORE IMMIGRANTS

More new workers will be immigrants than at any time since World War I.

SOURCE: January 1992, Manufacturing Engineering

National Curriculum

THESE FACTS ULTIMATELY LEAD TO.....THE SKILLS GAP

1. The private sector's training efforts, which now affect one of every 10 workers, would have to reach three of every 10. The cost: $8[illegible] billion.

2. Why is the bill so high?

   a. Bureau of Census tells us that one out of every four births in the U.S. in 1990 was illegitimate.

      --57% to black women
      --23% to Hispanic women
      --17% to white women

   b. Over two-thirds of births to teenage mothers were illegitimate, and 90% of births to black teenagers were illegitimate.

   c. Babies born out of wedlock are likely to be poor and disadvantaged, but babies born to teenagers are at greatest risk.

3. Today:

   *One of eight employees reads at no better than fourth grade level.

   *One in five reads at eighth grade level.

   *The National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) expects that U.S. employers will soon be hiring a million workers a year who cannot read, write, or count adequately. Those already at work will have to be trained--all 30 million of them.

   *As jobs grow more demanding, education and training deficiencies will continue to cause a fundamental mismatch between jobs and workers that will necessitate a substantial expansion in corporate training.

SOURCE: January 1992, Manufacturing Engineering

MANUFACTURING 2002

OLD PARADIGM	NEW PARADIGM
INSPECTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR QUALITY	WORKERS RESPONSIBLE FOR QUALITY
ONE WORKER AT ONE MACHINE	SELF-DIRECTED WORK TEAMS AT MACHINES
STATIC JOB ASSIGNMENTS	WORKER EMPOWERMENT
"MANAGEMENT THINKS, YOU DO"	"MANAGEMENT AND WORKERS THINK AND DO"
QUANTITY OVER QUALITY	QUALITY OVER QUANTITY
PRICE AND SUPPLY	QUALITY AND CUSTOMER SERVICE
COMPETITION	COLLABORATION
COLLUSION/ANTITRUST	MANUFACTURER NETWORKS
INDIVIDUAL INCENTIVES	GROUP INCENTIVES
"LET THE BUYER BEWARE"	EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL CUSTOMERS
LOCAL ORIENTATION	GLOBAL ORIENTATION
SINGLE JOB SKILLS	JOB CLUSTERS/SKILL FAMILIES
MUSCLE POWER	SMART MACHINERY
INDIVIDUAL EFFORTS	PARTNERSHIPS
SPORADIC TRAINING	CONSTANT TRAINING
"DEGREE" EDUCATION	LIFELONG OR COMPETENCY-BASED LEARNING

SOURCE: Society of Manufacturing Engineers. (1992, January). Future view: Will the workforce work? Manufacturing Engineering, pp. 46-60.

Activity #2: National Curriculum

Jury Notes:

Verdict:

Reasons To Support Verdict:

NATIONAL GOALS

BY THE YEAR 2000 ....

EDUCATION	BUSINESS	POLITICAL
* Every child will come to school ready to learn.	* Every employee will come to the job ready to work.	* Every politician will come to the job ready to work.
* The high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90%.	* Customer satisfaction will increase to at least 90%.	* 90% of legislation will be addressed to the needs and wants of U.S. citizens.
* American students will demonstrate competency in challenging subject matter, and every school will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well.	* American workers will demonstrate competency and show evidence of using their minds well.	* All politicians will demonstrate competency and show evidence of using their minds well.
* U.S. students will be first in the world in science and math achievement.	* U.S. workers will be first in the world in productivity and quality.	* U.S. politicians will be first in the world in integrity and ethical behavior.
* Every adult will be a literate, skilled, responsible citizen.	* Every worker will be a literate, skilled, responsible citizen.	* Every politician will be a literate, skilled, responsible citizen.
* Every school in America will be free of drugs and violence.	* Every workplace in America will be free of drugs and violence.	* Every legislative body in America will be free of scandal and corruption.

FROM: "A Different Strategy: How About National Goals for Business People and Politicians" by William J. Banach